

Deputies when it was proposed that the Pantheon should be restored to its former destination as the resting-place of the great men of France, and that Hugo's remains should be laid in it. This proposal having been shelved by the Chamber, the popular indignation became so great that President Gravy virtually took the law into his own hands, and issued a decree in accordance with public opinion. The obsequies became a great anticlerical demonstration.

Of course, for years past, many free-thinkers had been buried without the celebration of religious rites; but there had been only a few great secular public funerals, such as that of Felicien David, the composer, in 1876, later that of M. He'rold, Prefect of the Seine, and, later still, that of Gambetta. The *enterrement civil* of Victor Hugo marked another step in the same direction and it impressed thousands. More, even, than any of its forerunners, it set an example largely followed in later years.

When Zola heard of the death of Hugo he felt deeply stirred. He remembered the days of long ago, the happy days of Provence when he had learnt by heart page after page of the poet's writings. He had then drunk deeply of Hugo's sonorous rhetoric, and he had not ceased to admire his genius. The virtual failure of "Le Eoi s'amuse" when

it was revived in 1882 had pleased him from the Naturalist standpoint; yet he had not concealed his opinion that many passages of the play deserved applause, and in fact he had applauded them. "Why not, indeed?" he had ejaculated, turning to Edmond de Goncourt who had accompanied him to the Theatre Franc.ais. And whatever criticism Zola had levelled at the productions of Hugo's declining years, whatever reservations he might make re-